

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph on page 9, lines 9-16, which begins with the phrase “Figure 2 shows an embodiment”, with the following rewritten paragraph:

- - Figure 2 shows an embodiment of a blade assembly 10 that includes the blade holder 36 and a blade 38. The blade 38 is typically constructed from a hard stainless steel material that is stamped or machined into the configuration shown. The blade 38 is disposed in a blade plane and may include the cutting edge 40, a rear edge 44 and a pair of side edges 46. The front cutting edge 40 is disposed at a distance from the rear edge 44 along a first direction generally indicated by an arrow 122. The side edges 46 are disposed at a distance from each other along a second direction generally indicated by an arrow 124. The first direction 122 from the rear edge 44 to the front cutting edge 40 is thus a back-to-front direction and the second direction 124 is a side-to-side direction. The first direction 122 and the second direction 124 lie in the plane of the blade 38. The side edges 46 may each have a notch 48. The rear edge 44 may also have a notch 50. As illustrated in Figure 2, the notch 50 may includes a first inside edge 126, a second inside edge 128 facing the first inside edge 126, and a third inside edge 136 interposed between the first inside edge 126 and the second inside edge 128. - -

Please replace the paragraph on page 10, lines 4-14, which begins with the phrase “As shown in Figure 3,” with the following rewritten paragraph:

- - As shown in Figure 3, the blade holder 36 may have an outer groove 52. The blade holder 36 may also have a tapered top surface 53 to provide clearance for the pin 32 when the blade assembly 10 is loaded into the microkeratome 12. The blade holder 36 may be constructed

from a plastic material, wherein the groove 52 and slot 34 are either molded or machined into the blade holder 36. Referring to Figure 2, the blade holder 36 can be assembled onto the blade 38 by pushing the blade holder 36 into the notch 50 as indicated by an arrow 132, so that the edge of the notch 50 extends into the groove 52 (Figure 3) of the side of the blade holder 36. The front side of the blade holder 36 generally facing the front cutting edge 40 includes a reference surface 84 (see also Figure 13) that may generally adjoin the top surface 53 (Figure 3). When the blade assembly 10 is installed in the blade cavity 42 of a cutting head assembly 18 such as illustrated by example in Figure 1, the reference surface 84 of the blade holder 36 abuts against a corresponding reference surface 86 of the cutting head assembly 18 (such as may be located in or provided as an inside surface of the blade assembly cavity 42 shown in Figure 1). As noted previously, the distance between the reference surface 84 of the blade holder 36 and the front cutting edge 40 of the blade 38 dictates the cutting depth of the blade 38. In Figure 2, this distance is indicated by an arrow 134. It can be seen that this distance 134 may be adjusted, and the cutting depth thereby controlled or selected, during the assembly of the blade assembly 10. That is, in the present example the distance 134 may be adjusted by how far the blade holder 36 is pushed into the notch 50 of the blade 38 along the direction 132 (or, similarly, along the above-referenced first direction 122, or in the back-to-front direction). - -

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 11, lines 1-7, which begins with the phrase "Figures 5, 6 and 7 show another embodiment," with the following rewritten paragraph:

- - Figures 5, 6 and 7 show another embodiment of a blade assembly 10'. In this embodiment, the blade 38' has a plurality of fingers 56 within the notch 50'. The fingers 56 may

extend in a direction opposite and away from the cutting edge 40 of the blade 38', in a generally coplanar relation with the blade 38'. The fingers 56 can extend into corresponding slots 58 of the blade holder 36'. The fingers 56 increase the surface area and corresponding frictional forces that couple the blade 38' to the blade holder 36. As illustrated, each finger 56 includes an area 142 (Figure 5), a thickness 144 (Figure 7) perpendicular to the area 142, and a finger edge 146 (Figures 5 and 7) bounding the area 142 and extending along the direction of the thickness 144. One or more portions of the finger edge 146 may frictionally engage the corresponding slot 58 of the blade holder 36'. As in the case of the implementation described above and illustrated in Figures 2-4, the distance between the reference surface 84 of the blade holder 36' and the front cutting edge 40 of the blade 38' is adjustable by the amount by which the blade holder 36' is pushed into the notch 50' of the blade 38', and in the present example by how far the fingers 56 extend into the slots 58. - -